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An excess military vehicle fights a new fight with Ross Volunteer Fire Department

ROSS, Texas – Through the Department of Defense Firefighter Property Program, the Ross Volunteer Fire Department received an excess military truck and converted it into a tanker for firefighting with grant support from the Rural Voluntary Fire Department Assistance Program. Texas A&M Forest Service administers both programs.

“Our department is very pleased to have received the 2003 5-ton apparatus and a \$20,000 slip-on unit grant that allowed us to convert the truck into something that can be used as a large brush truck or tanker, since it can carry 1,700 gallons of water and has foam capability,” said Ross VFD Fire Chief Joey Jaska.

The department’s service area not only includes homes and structures but also farm and pasture land.

“This truck will allow the department greater capacity when protecting their service area, giving them an increased water supply and a dependable means of transporting it,” said Texas A&M Forest Service Regional Fire Coordinator Matthew Schlaefer.

Ross VFD was established in 1976 and is grateful for the continued backing by local residents.

“Our community understands the importance of having local fire service and is very supportive,” said Jaska. “The grant stipulations for accepting the military truck was to paint it a nonmilitary color and make it service ready. Their generous contributions helped in building this truck into the firefighting machine that it is.”

The truck has gone into service and has already been used to respond to two grass fires.

Texas A&M Forest Service is committed to protecting lives and property through various fire department assistance programs. The Department of Defense Firefighter Property Program launched in Texas in 2005, is one such program and has released over 700 retired military trucks to Volunteer Fire Departments across the state. The Agency transports the vehicle from a military installation, performs necessary repairs and delivers it to the volunteer fire department at no cost to them. The USDA Forest Service oversees the program nationwide and is the supplier of the excess military equipment to fire departments and emergency service providers.

For more information on programs offered by Texas A&M Forest Service, please visit <http://texasfd.com> .

